

## Minutes Leurich Field Exploratory Meeting 7/21 2015, 6pm, Town Hall

Attendance: Selectmen Greg Eckhardt, John Ogden, and Jeremiah Evarts; Treasurer Andrea Ogden; Clerk Chrystal Cleary; **Public:** Karl T. Pfister, Fritz and Jim Mills, May Bigelow, Priscilla Grayson, Michael and Christine Morfit, Harry Nutting, Rob and Annie Aft, Clarence and Pauline Nichols, Karl Schubert, Mary and John English, James Young, Bruno Licata, Gisela Gamper, Bobby and Sally Waite, Melva Bigelow, Cameron Chalmers, Claudia Harris, (and some others who arrived after the attendance.)

Meeting called to order at 6:06 pm

Jeremiah Evarts introduced the meeting saying that this is the very earliest stage of exploring the idea of solving the decades-old problem of keeping an unsightly pile of winter road sand and town vehicles in the dirt lot part of the Town's Leurich Field parcel. So far the Selectboard (SB) has investigated the deed and shown it to Lexi Young, one of our Town lawyers. Objectives of the project would be:

- to protect Town equipment and the sand we purchase from the elements and theft/damage
- to protect the adjoining wetlands from sand runoff: while not technically in the flood plain, we don't want the loss of road sand nor the impact of sand working its way into the wetland.
- to improve the scenic quality of the area by concealing equipment within a pleasing structure
- to improve access to the Leurich Field, the Utley Brook and make the field drier for recreation.

Several iterations of Selectboards have looked around Town for land to purchase for an Equipment Barn, but no better location has emerged- requirements are that it be centrally located and accessible for Jay to get to in an ice storm (ie: not on a hill). Mr Lokey of the state Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has been down to walk the site and declared that the use of the site is not in violation of any environmental regulations and that its longtime use for storage predates many regulations.

The meeting serves to gauge public interest in the Selectboard taking steps to investigate further what is needed to construct a building within the parameters set in the Vermont Land Trust easement deed (no more than 4,000 sq feet, and 32 feet tall), improve access to the recreation field behind the equipment area, and improve access to Utley Brook and the field itself, which is often too wet to play on. The building would need to look 'nice'- perhaps a standing seam metal roof and barn board siding over a steel frame?

Lexi Young spoke about what the deed says: The land was deeded to the Town in 1971 by the Leurichs and then the Town deeded a scenic easement to Vermont Land Trust in 1993. The deed from the Leurichs had 4 conditions:

- the land gifted to the citizens of Landgrove and their guests for recreation
- the gift serves in memory of WWII deceased servicemen
- no overnight camping
- no structures to be built on it

Who could enforce the restrictions? 1) the heirs of Leurich, though we are advised there are none. 2) successors in title to the deed could choose to release the restriction 3) since the deed is also to the "citizens," a vote could be taken to enforce or release the restrictions 4) if the Town were to sell the property, the buyer could enforce the restrictions.

Mary English - How much space is needed? The zoning setback would require that any structure be 75 feet from the center of the road.

Melva Bigelow- How close would it be to the Brook? How significant a facility?

Greg Eckhardt- A structure should fit on the existing "footprint" of the truck yard and not infringe on the Leurich Field itself. It should also not block access to the Field. The Town would like to run power to the structure and include a bathroom with a tank system.

After several inquiries for specifics, a drawing, which way the building would face, siding and roofing materials, we were reminded that those details would be determined further down the road when more information has been gleaned, a designer contracted, etc. and that there would be more meetings as we go to keep everyone informed and involved.

What about abutters?

Jeremiah has spoken with Alan Terrell, who would like to be involved if the Town chooses to do this.

Priscilla Grayson (Conservation Committee) asked for an inventory of the land and brook access, and pointed out that the Brook has little protection via trees and maybe as part of the improvement of the parcel a riparian buffer could be created to cool the brook and encourage fish.

Melva notes that the impact will be permanent and an impact study should be undertaken.

Jeremiah said that the Field is hard to use due to wetness and inconvenient access. The wetness is caused by a succession of 7 beaver impoundments and an old berm restricting drainage. Greg explains that the beavers are being trapped and if the berm were taken down to level and dirt from ditching could be used to raise the level of the field, it would go a way toward restoring playability of the Field. John described how while mowing it with his tractor this summer he experienced the low areas that didn't drain firsthand. Melva asked if it would be legal to do these things, but that answer will require further investigation.

Jay Snyder and Priscilla feel the total Leurich property improvements should be taken as a package of the town garage/barn/shed AND improvement of the playing field.

John Ogden- The Selectboard wants this to grow out of the community, is there support for further research?

Nancie Heinemann described the Woodstock Town Garage is actually quite rustic and nice looking and if we did something it could be like that. Andrea Ogden explained that Vermont Land Trust actually has in the deed, a Scenic Easement and would have ultimate design review and approval, the siting and aesthetic has to fulfill their scenic easement. Jeremiah reports that the VLT lawyer is still reviewing the deed and has not gotten back to us yet.

Michael Morfit observes broad agreement on three things - that it has been a problem for decades, that this is the most likely site and the encouragement to look at it as part of a broader plan. Karl Schubert disagrees and would prefer to see everything left as it is.

When the project eventually arrives at financing, the voters would be asked to approve that. A budget for for development would need to be made, and strategy for long term maintenance. Planning Commission and Conservation Commission need to be kept closely in the loop.

Claudia Harris called for a show of hands and the consensus of those present is to move forward with investigating this site for a Town Garage/Barn and improvement of the total Leurich Field site. Rob Aft reminded us that the deed does indicate that the Field serves to honor WWII deceased and some naming or marker ought to indicate that as a memorial. Jerry Hassett suggested that a cost/benefit analysis be run on the project to compare savings to the Town and keep the cost of the construction in line.

John Ogden reminded all present that the SelectBoard meets twice a month, on the second Thursday at 8am and on the 4th Thursday at 6pm and all are welcome to attend and be involved.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58pm